

Message Text

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20

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

SAJ-01 /056 W

----- 089809

R 272345Z FEB 75

FM AMCONSUL SYDNEY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6077

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AS, PFOR

SUBJ: NSW REPLACEMENT FOR FORMER SENATOR MURPHY

REF : SYDNEY 0367

1. IN AN UNRULY 90 MINUTE JOINT SESSION OF BOTH HOUSES
TODAY, NEW PARLIAMENT ELECTED MAYOR OF ALBURY, CLEAVER
BUNTON BY A VOTE OF 87 TO 70 TO FILL UNEXPIRED TERM OF
LIONEL MURPHY. LABOR OPPOSITION CHALLENGED LEGALITY OF
JOINT SESSION ON TECHNICAL GROUNDS, USING THE OPPORTUNITY
TO GET MAXIMUM PRESS AND TV ATTENTION TO THEIR ARGUMENTS
AND TO PORTRAY PREMIER LEWIS AS AN IMPULSIVE NOVICE WHO
TRIED TO BE "IRON FISTED BUT ENDED UP IRON-HEADED". AFTER
THE SPEAKER RULED AGAINST OPPOSITION LEADER WRAN'S
TECHNICALITY, THE LABOR BENCHES BECAME INCREASINGLY NOISY
AND UNRULY, MAKING IT IMPOSSIBLE TO HEAR PREMIER LEWIS'
NOMINATING SPEECH FOR BURTON, OR THE SPEAKER'S RULINGS.
NEAR THE END, THE SPEAKER SUMMONED POLICE AS A THREAT TO
ONE LOUD AND INSULTING LABOR MEMBER. GOVERNMENT BENCHES
CONFIDENT THEY "HAD THE NUMBERS" WERE QUIET THROUGHOUT,
ALLOWING OPPOSITION TO VENT ITS EMOTIONS AND THEN MOVED
WITH CLOCKWORK REGULARITY THROUGH THE STEPS OF THE ELECTION.

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2. ELECTION OF 72 YEAR OLD BUNTON, NOT AFFILIATED WITH
ANY PARTY IS INTENDED TO MUTE CHARGES THAT LIBS WERE UN-
FAIRLY EXPLOITING THE OCCASION AND ALSO TO DRAMATIZE
THE STATES-RIGHTS ISSUE. BUNTON RECOGNIZES HIS TERM WILL
END BEFORE JULY 1976 AND HAS SAID HE WILL NOT STAND FOR
RE-ELECTION.

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Message Attributes

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Disposition History: n/a
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